

FIGHTING WITH ONE HAND TIED: CONSTRAINTS ON FORCE IN THE POST COLD WAR ERA

**A MONOGRAPH
BY
Major Timothy A. Jones
Aviation**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff
College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

SECOND TERM AY 96-97

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19971107 014

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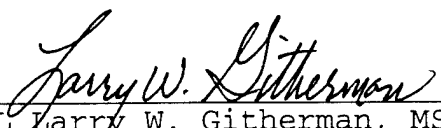
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Major Timothy A. Jones

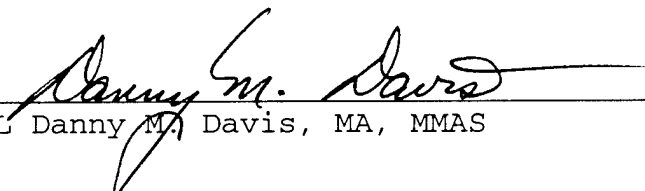
Title of Monograph: *Fighting With One Hand Tied: Constraints
on Force in the Post Cold War Era*

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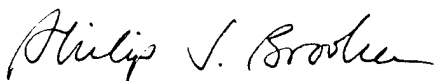
COL Larry W. Githerman, MSA

Monograph Director



COL Danny M. Davis, MA, MMAS

Director, School of
Advanced Military
Studies



Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.

Director, Graduate
Degree Program

Accepted this 22d Day of May 1997

ABSTRACT

FIGHTING WITH ONE HAND TIED: CONSTRAINTS ON FORCE IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA by MAJ Timothy A. Jones, USA, 56 pages.

There has been much debate in recent years over constraints on military force in wartime. American civil-military relations are based on civilian control of the military. Concerns over how that control is exercised, however, fuel the debate. Concerns center around fears that political factors will interfere with how the military prosecutes the war. The genesis of these fears lies in the perceptions that political constraints tied the military's hands unnecessarily in Vietnam, contributing to the loss of the war.

This monograph examines the role of the Vietnam War in shaping how policy makers and the military view the military use of force and the relationship between military force and the policy it supports. The Gulf War and the U.S. intervention in Somalia offer perspectives from both ends of the limited war spectrum on how political factors impact on military operations in the post-Cold War era.

The paper concludes that military force is not likely to be constrained significantly by political considerations when combat is expected. A more significant impact occurs when military operations other than war escalate into combat operations. In general, however, events since the Vietnam War have built a greater degree of cooperation and trust between the military and its civilian leadership. A careful analysis and understanding of national security objectives allows the military to plan and execute missions within self-imposed limits on force, preempting policy constraints and their impact on military operations.

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Introduction

There has been much discussion in recent years about the constraints placed on the warfighter by the policy maker. This debate became especially prevalent in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, as soldiers and statesmen alike grappled to come to terms with what was clearly a defeat, perhaps the first clear defeat suffered by the United States of America; the debate continues today. The recent conflict in the Gulf has caused further reflection on the loss in Vietnam. As the nation prepared for the Gulf War, a war that was expected to take a heavy toll in American blood and national treasure, a common rallying cry, among soldier, statesman, and civilian alike, was "No more Vietnams!". The implication was that this time we would do it right. This would be a war that the military was allowed to win, loosed of the rigid micromanagement and restrictions which many within and outside the military credited with our loss in Vietnam. While policy decisions that served to guide the strategic direction of the Vietnam War were to be expected, many believed an inordinate degree of civilian interference at the tactical and operational levels hindered the military's prosecution of the war.

More recently, a Secretary of Defense tendered his resignation after it was revealed he had denied, for political rather than military considerations, the military commander in Somalia the use of American tanks and AC-130 gunships. Such forces might have saved American lives in a subsequent firefight in which 18 U.S. soldiers died. Furthermore, the conventional

wisdom in political and media circles is that the American public has no stomach for U.S. casualties in military operations and that, as casualties escalate, public consensus will demand U.S. withdrawal. This perception instills a fear among some in the military of additional constraints, albeit well-intentioned, that would further hamper future military mission accomplishment. On the other hand, some policy constraints on military force are necessary to effectively integrate military strategy into national strategy. The purpose of this paper is to examine the constraints on the use of force placed on the American military by its civilian leadership, and determine if policy constraints on military operations have adversely affected attainment of the desired strategic end states.

Theoretical Foundations

Constraints imposed on the military by policy makers are neither new nor unique to the American military. Political oversight of the means of waging war is a natural adjunct to the purpose of war itself. In examining the nature of war, Carl von Clausewitz defines war as an extension of policy that can not and should not be removed from its political context:

The main lines along which military events progress, and to which they are restricted, are political lines that continue throughout war into the subsequent peace. How could it be otherwise? Do political relations between peoples and between their governments stop when diplomatic notes are no longer exchanged? Is not war just another expression of their thoughts, another form of speech or writing? Its grammar, indeed, may be its own, but not its logic.¹

It is this “grammar” of war with which we are concerned. To what degree is it or should it be shaped by policy makers?

Clausewitz clearly believed that political ends would direct the military means. It is because of these constraints “that war does not advance relentlessly toward the absolute, as theory would demand.”² The degree to which war approaches Clausewitz’s concept of absolute, or total, war however is dependent on the resoluteness (resolve) of public policy: “If war is part of policy, policy will determine its character. As policy becomes more ambitious and vigorous, so will war, and this may reach the point where war attains its absolute form.”³

Public policy in a democracy stems, directly or indirectly, from the desires of the people, not the military. The American military tradition is strongly rooted in civilian control. In his landmark volume on civil-military relations, *The Soldier and the State*, Samuel Huntington documented the genesis of the distrust in the United States between the military and its civilian masters. The root of this distrust lies in the combination of a generally liberal ideology and a conservative constitution designed to prevent the concentration of power in any one governmental unit. These two factors have been “the relatively unchanging environmental constants of American civil-military relations” that have combined to make “objective civilian control depend upon the virtually total exclusion of the military from political power.”⁴ This liberalism, which Huntington defines as an emphasis on

individualism, has as its basic beliefs a view that "the natural relation [among men] is peace," and

that the way to peace is through institutional devices such as international law, international courts, and international organization. Liberalism has many pacifist tendencies, but the liberal will normally support a war waged to further liberal ideals. War as an instrument of national policy is immoral; war on behalf of universally true principles of justice and freedom is not. The liberal thus opposes war in general but frequently supports it in particular, while the military man accepts war in the abstract but opposes its specific manifestations.⁵

This view puts the liberal at odds with the military man who, according to Huntington, views conflict as the natural relation among men, believes individualism should be subordinated to the group, and "emphasizes the importance of power in human relations."⁶

The liberal view of war impacts on how and when the nation will employ its military. The first and perhaps most obvious political decision that limits the use of force is whether to employ military force at all. Huntington argues that "American nationalism has been an idealistic nationalism, justified, not by the assertion of the superiority of the American people over other peoples, but by the assertion of the superiority of American ideals over other ideals."⁷ Americans, therefore, cannot fight wars merely for the sake of national interests. Americans need a crusade for which to fight:

American idealism has tended to make every war a crusade, fought, not for specific objectives of national security, but on behalf of universal principles such as democracy, freedom of the seas, and self-determination. Indeed, for the American a war is not a war unless it is a crusade.⁸

This view is echoed by Stephen Stedman, commenting on post-Cold War interventions: "The new interventionism has its roots in long-standing tendencies of American foreign policy – missionary zeal, bewilderment when the world refuses to conform to American expectations and a belief that for every problem there is a quick and easy solution."⁹

Policy also influences force by limiting the application of force once the decision to employ the military has been made. This most often takes the form of limitations placed on the amount of military force used. Force caps on troops to be deployed in theater are a common example. Since the Second World War, U.S. presidents have had to concern themselves with the political signals associated with the size of force sent. Throughout the Cold War years, the requirement to maintain a sufficient deterrent force in Europe as well as national reserve was an additional factor to be considered in setting force size for a particular contingency.

The type of force to be used generates similar concerns. Each branch of service brings with it different capabilities. Perhaps more importantly, each branch also brings the potential for different levels of violence. A battery of Patriot missiles sends a much different signal than a battery of MLRS launchers or a tank battalion.

The Legacy of Vietnam

The Vietnam war serves as a useful reference for examining the current relationship between policy makers and the military. Virtually every

military operation conducted since Vietnam has suffered comparisons to that conflict. Discussions on the conduct of the Gulf War invariable involve comparisons to Vietnam. Discussions before the Gulf War cautioned against forgetting the lessons learned from Vietnam, the point being that the nation could not allow "another Vietnam" to occur. Which Vietnam the Gulf War was not supposed to be was the subject of a 1993 essay by historian Lorenzo Crowell. Crowell found that the lessons taken from Vietnam varied widely, depending the different experiences and level of responsibility of the observer. However, many lessons deal with constraints or perceived constraints on the military.¹⁰ For the professional military officer, the Gulf War would not be the Vietnam of gradual escalation in which the military was denied from the beginning the use of overwhelming force capable of bringing about a rapid and positive decision. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell remarked to troops in Saudi Arabia that "When we launch it, we will make it decisive so we can get it over as quickly as possible and there's no question who won."¹¹ For many Congressmen, this would not be a war with limited Congressional oversight, in which the military and the president could call the shots without the full representation of the American people. President George Bush would not permit the Gulf War to become the prolonged war of attrition that became the curse of President Lyndon Johnson, declaring in December 1990, "Let me assure you, should military action be required, this will not be another Vietnam.... This will not be a protracted, drawn-out war."¹²

Based largely on how they viewed the conduct of the war, and who they blamed for failure, following generations of Americans view U.S. military involvement through a lens shaped by the legacy of Vietnam. The war's impact on how military force would be constrained in future operations can be traced to two unique aspects of the war. The first aspect deals with how America fought the war – the strategy for America's first defeat. The second aspect deals with a factor that undoubtedly contributed to the President's decision to de-escalate and ultimately withdraw from the war – American public opinion.

The United States fought the Vietnam War without a clear understanding of national interests and objectives. President Lyndon Johnson had a broad outcome in mind – stopping the spread of Communism. Based around the American policy of containment first promoted by Truman in the late 1940's, American objectives centered on maintaining the freedom of South Vietnam from Communist takeover. The Johnson administration was unable, however, to translate the political objective, a free South Vietnam, into an effective strategy incorporating diplomatic, military, and economic instruments of national power.¹³ According to political science professor Larry Berman, "the U.S. goal in Vietnam was not military victory in the classical sense. If it had been, the war would have been fought on quite different terms." Rather, "the U.S. goal was to build democratic political stability in the South, not destroy the North."¹⁴ American military power could suppress the insurgency or defeat NVA regulars in the field, but

diplomacy, social programs, and economic reform would be required to insure a legitimate South Vietnamese government remained. No one in the Johnson administration was able to pull it all together, to clearly establish an identifiable and attainable political policy. In enumerating what he considered to be the "major failures" of the war in Vietnam, Robert McNamara reported that underlying many of the errors the U.S. made in the war "lay our failure to organize the top echelons of the executive branch to deal effectively with the extraordinarily complex range of political and military issues, involving the great risks and costs – including, above all else, loss of life – associated with the application of military force under substantial constraints over a long period of time."¹⁵

An additional consideration was that, from the U.S. standpoint at least, the war was to be a limited one. It would be fought with limited means for limited political objectives. As was the case with Korea ten years before, stemming the tide of communism anywhere it encroached was an important goal. However, the primary threat to U.S. national interests lay in the Soviet Union. The European theater must remain the main effort.¹⁶ A military strategy would have to defeat guerrilla insurgents in the South as well as conventional North Vietnamese forces crossing the borders from North Vietnam, Laos, or Cambodia.

Limited war theory in the early 1960's was based primarily on the writings of Robert Osgood and Thomas Schelling, both of whom arrived at a similar conclusion: limited war is more about diplomacy and bargaining than

military action.¹⁷ Both the administration and its military advisors understood the limited nature of the war, yet as U.S. involvement increased in the early 1960's they thought more in terms of military solutions alone. This neglect of strategy may have been due to initial overconfidence: "Americans could not conceive that the United States would be unable to impose its will on what Lyndon Johnson once referred to as that 'raggedy-ass little fourth-rate country.'"¹⁸ Although the political results of military operations may not have been calculated, they gradually began to take on greater importance in the eyes of Johnson and his inner circle of advisors. Military decisions were made based less and less on what effect they would have on battlefield success and more in terms of what signal was being sent to the North Vietnamese government.¹⁹ This resulted in a campaign of gradual escalation in the application of military force, which was tied to diplomatic bargaining. Such a situation can easily frustrate military planners intent on prosecuting a war. Discussions in 1965 on the numbers of American troops to be committed centered less on military estimates of the number required to salvage a worsening situation in South Vietnam than on the minimum commitment necessary to send the proper signal of U.S. resolve.²⁰ The administration saw military actions against the North not in terms of impact on the North Vietnamese *ability* to wage war but rather on its *will* to wage war. Such an emphasis on sending the proper signals resulted in militarily ineffective attacks on the enemy's will that nevertheless served to drain critical resources.²¹ They also diverted attention away from

military strategies and further complicated military operations. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the air war against North Vietnam. In his memoirs, General William Westmoreland cited an instance in which a Johnson advisor ridiculed his request to bomb surface-to-air missile sites being constructed by North Vietnam with Soviet assistance before they became operational.

“You don’t think the North Vietnamese are going to use them!” he scoffed to General Moore. Putting them in is just a political ploy by the Russians to appease Hanoi.”

It was all a matter of signals, said the clever civilian theorists in Washington. We won’t bomb the SAM sites, which signals the North Vietnamese not to use them. Had it not been so serious, it would have been amusing.²²

Westmoreland cited other interference from Washington as “seriously hampering” the air campaign:

Washington had to approve all targets in North Vietnam, and even though the Joint Chiefs submitted long-range programs, the State Department constantly interfered with individual missions. This or that target was not to be hit for this or that nebulous nonmilitary reason. Missions for which planning and rehearsal had long proceeded might be canceled at the last minute. President Johnson allegedly boasted on one occasion that “they can’t even bomb an outhouse without my approval.”²³

To be fair, legitimate political concerns marked many of the restrictions on attacks on North Vietnam. Johnson feared attacks on targets near China or accidental attacks on Soviet or Chinese ships in North Vietnamese harbors could draw one or both of those countries into the war. However, Johnson also revealed a degree of distrust in the military regarding the constraints he

imposed in the strategic bombing campaign. In reacting to criticism by some members of Congress that he had unnecessarily shackled the military in its conduct of the bombing campaign, Johnson declared, "Well, I want you to know that I believe in civilian government, and we will have civilian government as long as I am President." In reference to JCS recommended targets in the buffer zone along the border with China, he added "The generals are ready to bomb there, but I'm not – there's a difference in judgment."²⁴ In the end, all but 39 of the 242 targets in North Vietnam recommended by the Joint Chiefs were approved.

However, the perception of Washington interference lingered to become a legacy of the war. Such an emphasis on the political aspects of military operations is greedily seized upon by those who insist that war fighting be left to the warriors, once the civilians have made the decision to wage the war. This is especially true with the benefit of hindsight, when many such decisions can be seen to be at best ineffective and at worst downright detrimental to America's servicemen and overall efforts.

However, the military must shoulder its share of the blame for the loss as well. While paying lip-service to counterinsurgency, the bulk of U.S. military forces became embroiled in a war of attrition against both the NVA and the Viet Cong insurgents. In his study of the Army in Vietnam, Andrew Krepinevich recounts the failure of large amounts of firepower to reduce U.S. casualties as it had in previous wars, while alienating the very people it was fighting for through high levels of collateral damage and civilian casualties.²⁵

Rather than adapting to the situation, "the Army ended up trying to fight the kind of conventional war that it was trained, organized, and prepared (and that it *wanted*) to fight instead of the counterinsurgency war it was sent to fight."²⁶ (emphasis in original) Additionally, the U.S. failed to develop the army of South Vietnam into an effective fighting force capable of maintaining its country's security.²⁷

American Lessons Learned

As America's war in Vietnam came to a close, soldiers, statesmen, and civilians alike vowed not to repeat the experience. The war left a deep impression on the national consciousness, the impact of which is still being felt. Each of the players and institutions involved took from the war a series of lessons that, in an effort to avoid the same mistakes, would shape both the nation's ability to use military force and how the military would use that force. These lessons have been passed on to following generations as perceptions and biases that have become institutionalized to such a degree that soldiers and policy makers who were too young to remember, much less understand, the war have strong opinions on what occurred or how the war was handled.

A clear strategy and objectives. Military and civilian leaders alike decried the fact that, from the beginning of U.S. military involvement, there was no clear American strategy for winning a limited war in Vietnam.

Without clear guidance on objectives (the ends) from the Johnson administration, the military was unable to develop an effective military strategy to attain those ends (the means).

Congressional control. Congress learned that inadequate checks on the power of the president as commander in chief can lead to usurpation of their constitutional war-making power. They would attempt to remedy this situation with the passage of the War Powers Act of 1973. The president, on the other hand, learned that his actions as commander in chief could essentially nullify Congressional desires to impose limitations or otherwise impact on the use of the military.

The importance of U.S. popular support. This lesson is perhaps the most enduring of the war. Public support has become critical to military interventions. This manifests itself not only in the minds of the politicians, who rely on popular support for reelection, but also in the minds of military leaders, who bear guardianship over America's sons and daughters and the professional reputation of the military. The result is a much greater sensitivity to how the American public will react to casualties, both U.S. and civilian, in order to insure popular support. Of further importance is the relationship with the press, that can increasingly bring the triumphs and tragedies of the battlefield into the homes of the American people and therefore influence that popular support.

The military must be allowed to win. Many observers and participants, especially in the military, blamed the loss of the war on

micromanagement and unnecessary constraints imposed by the civilian leadership. Geographical restrictions on employment of U.S. forces as well as restrictions placed on strategic bombing in North Vietnam gave the enemy sanctuaries and breathing room he should not be allowed to have. Especially contentious was the gradual escalation of force. Had the military been able to employ overwhelming and constant force, the outcome may have been different. Regardless of the legitimacy of many of the constraints, the perception by many was that the military's hands were tied.

Post Vietnam Constraints on Force

In a discussion on constraints the U.S. would be likely to face in modern conflicts, Eliot A. Cohen of Harvard described in 1984 three types of political constraints, "all of which were intensified by the war in Vietnam." Although his essay oriented on constraints in what he termed "small wars" of the Cold War era, they apply equally to the conflicts America has involved herself in following the Cold War.²⁸

Public Opinion

The first of Cohen's constraints, public opinion, refers to "public revulsion against any kind of military commitment which could involve American troops in a war such as that which took 50,000 American lives in the jungles of Southeast Asia. ... [I]t is assumed, popular opinion will

severely limit the willingness of the American people to support a similar kind of war.”²⁹ Closely linked to public opinion is the role of the press in today’s culture. Images of the horrors of war can today be broadcast almost instantly. The conventional wisdom is that American support for a war is dependent on the numbers of U.S. casualties suffered, and the media provides the American public instant access to those casualties. This sensitivity is another legacy of Vietnam.

It has been said that the war was won on the battlefields of Vietnam but lost in America’s living rooms. Both the politicians and the military heaped blame upon the press for its reporting of the war. President Johnson claimed in an interview in 1967 that “NBC and the *New York Times* are committed to an editorial policy of making us surrender.”³⁰ Westmoreland wrote of a strained relationship with the press and expressed frustration with inaccurate reporting and sensationalism, yet also stressed some positive effects of press involvement.³¹ And Secretary of State Dean Rusk once exclaimed against the press, “There gets to be a point when the question is whose side are you on.”³² Contrary to popular opinion, the press was not critical of the war in Vietnam from the beginning. Journalists who later were to become outspoken critics of the war reported favorably on U.S. actions in the early years of involvement.³³ Press coverage in fact was generally favorable until the Tet offensive of 1968.³⁴ Yet while the press certainly played a role in influencing American public opinion toward non-support of the war, the real factor in alienating the American public was not

the news coverage but what the news was reporting. The factor that made Americans question the success of the war was casualties.

Public dissatisfaction with the war began to increase around the middle of 1966, as the number of U.S. servicemen killed climbed over 5000 and the percentage of Americans expecting a long, bloody war jumped from 54 to 72 percent in only a few months.³⁵ In a study of the impact of U.S. casualties on public opinion during the war, John Mueller found that popular support for the war declined on average 15 percentage points with each ten-fold increase of total Americans killed and wounded. A parallel trend occurred in the Korean War over 10 years previously, which received nowhere near the same level of media, especially television, attention.³⁶ The press seemed to follow, rather than lead, public discontent.

In a study for RAND, Eric Larson explores the link between U.S. casualties sustained in military operations and American public opinion. While casualty figures affect popular support, they are balanced against the perceived benefits of intervention. Prospects for success in the operation as well as changing expectations also impact on public opinion.³⁷ Larson concluded that public support for the war in Vietnam eroded because "the increasing costs came to be judged by majorities as being incommensurate with the expected benefits of the war and its prospects for success," compounded by "changing perceptions of the stakes or interests, progress in the war, and divisions among leaders."³⁸

International Politics

The second of Cohen's constraints is international politics. The desire for a favorable position among foreign states "is likely to constrain American Presidents from committing troops overseas." Since the end of the Cold War, America has relied increasingly on building international support for military intervention. To avoid becoming "the world's policeman" the United States emphasizes multilateral action under the auspices of the United Nations or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Ironically, this reliance on coalitions has itself become a constraint as Congress and American public opinion are set firmly against subordinating U.S. troops to foreign commands. This self-imposed constraint forces the U.S. to assume a leadership position any time U.S. troops are involved if it is to maintain full control of those troops.

U.S. Congress

As American troops pulled out of Vietnam, Congress imposed what many considered at the time the most important constraint on use of American military force in the form of the War Powers Resolution. Passed over Presidential veto in 1973, the Act was intended to reassert the war-making authority of Congress that some felt had been subverted by Presidential misinterpretation of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which in

essence allowed a war to occur with little debate before Congress.³⁹ In addition to requiring the president to consult with Congress prior to employing U.S. troops, as well as making regular reports on the status of the operation, the Act gave Congress essentially veto authority over presidential troop deployments. Unless specifically authorized by Congress, American troops must be redeployed after sixty days (or 90 days, if the President declares it necessary).⁴⁰ The Act was meant to restrict presidential power to engage military forces in lengthy conflicts without Congressional debate and approval.

It may actually have strengthened the president's power, however, giving him essentially a 60-90 day blank check. And while Congress can reverse the President's decision, "once the president has committed national prestige, it becomes politically and, possibly, militarily impossible to reverse the operation. In such circumstances, legislators will tend to 'rally 'round the flag' rather than subject the merits of the operation to a full independent debate."⁴¹

Institutional Constraints

In the aftermath of the loss in Vietnam, as well as 1980's abortive Iranian hostage rescue attempt and the 1983 Marine Barracks disaster in Beirut, a Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have added their own non-legislative ideas to how and when the president should use military force in what have become known as the Weinberger Doctrine

and the Powell Doctrine. Questioning whether the Reagan administration was becoming too “trigger-happy” regarding military intervention, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger outlined, as a self-restraining measure, six criteria for committing U.S. armed forces.⁴² The doctrine would also serve to prevent a reoccurrence of many of the problems identified with the Vietnam War. In summary, the criteria include:

1. The issue must be of vital interest to the United States.
2. U.S. combat troops should be committed wholeheartedly, with the intention of winning.
3. There must be clearly defined political and military objectives.
4. Relationships between forces and objectives must be continually reassessed and adjusted.
5. There must be reasonable assurance that U.S. involvement will have the support of the American people and Congress.
6. Commitment of U.S. forces should be a last resort.⁴³

A criticism of the Weinberger doctrine is that it is too constraining, possibly denying the use of force in instances where it is justified and appropriate. Secretary of State George Schultz later called the doctrine “a counsel of inaction bordering on paralysis.”⁴⁴

General Colin Powell, who served as President Reagan’s National Security Advisor late in his second term, amplified certain aspects of Weinberger’s criteria. What would become known as the Powell Doctrine specifies overwhelming force to achieve rapid, decisive victory. Political objectives must be clearly identified, and exit criteria established to allow for extraction of the military as soon as the aims are achieved. By applying these criteria, Powell believed the military could achieve political objectives

while maintaining public support and without sinking into a quagmire of ambiguous objectives and victory conditions. Powell was successful in applying his criteria during the Bush years, and they later became the basis for the Clinton Administration's guidelines on the use of force, with the experience of Somalia emphasizing the need for timelines and a specific exit strategy.⁴⁵

Post-Cold War Impact

Each of these constraints has as its root one or more lessons taken from the Vietnam War, and each has impacted American use of force to varying degrees. In examining the impact these constraints have on warfare in the post-Cold War era, I will examine two applications of U.S. military force, one generally viewed as a success and the other a failure. Operation Desert Storm and Operation Restore Hope offer perspectives from both ends of the limited war spectrum.

The Gulf War

The American military was thoroughly prepared for the war against Iraq. For years the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines had been trained, structured, and equipped to fight the Soviet Union on the plains of Europe. In Iraq they faced a military using Soviet equipment and Soviet tactics on a barren landscape that would serve to complement U.S. long-range weapons

systems. It was, however, “a thoroughly modern war, bounded on all sides and shaped daily by the demands of policy.”⁴⁶

As President Bush gathered his advisors together to discuss options in the wake of Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, CJCS Powell was determined to remain proactive in seeking a clear objective. During the meeting, he admittedly overstepped his bounds as military advisor to the president when he posed the question as to whether it was worth going to war to liberate Kuwait. He explained his actions later as an attempt to avoid “the docility of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [in the Vietnam era], fighting the war in Vietnam without ever pressing the political leaders to lay out clear objectives for them.”⁴⁷

Military and civilian leaders alike were determined not to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam. Bush was to offer little interference in the detailed military planning of the Gulf War. The President and his cabinet were generally content to provide broad political guidance and let the military design the campaign.⁴⁸ This campaign design was left to the Commander in Chief of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), General Norman Schwarzkopf. Schwarzkopf brought with him to the Gulf theater his own view of civil-military relations shaped by his experiences in Vietnam: “We in the military hadn’t chosen the enemy or written the order – our elected leaders had. Nevertheless, we were taking much of the blame. ... I couldn’t shake the feeling that America had betrayed the South Vietnamese.”⁴⁹

In terms of forces required, Schwarzkopf would receive virtually everything he asked for. To avoid the gradual escalation he observed in Vietnam, and taking a lesson from Operation Just Cause in Panama, Powell supported everything the CINC asked for and then some. Powell's goal, in his words, was to "[g]o in big, and end it quickly."⁵⁰ In a meeting with Schwarzkopf in October, Powell told the CINC "you've got to understand that the President and Cheney will give you anything you need to get the job done. And don't worry, ... you won't be jumping off until you're ready."⁵¹ As will be seen later, Schwarzkopf was in fact allowed to kick off the offensive only after he was ready, but not without some pressure from the White House.

While the political leadership tried to stay out of the way of the military, they were concerned about garnering public support for the operation. Military leaders shared this concern, remembering the hostile reception that greeted many on their return from Vietnam. The impact that high numbers of U.S. casualties might have on American public opinion and consequently its support for the war certainly impacted on the battlefield decisions made by some senior military planners and commanders. According to the Gulf War Airpower Survey, a study commissioned by the Air Force following the war, the Joint Force Air Component Commander, LTG Charles A. Horner, emphasized in early February 1991 "that American support at home for the war depended in large measure on the ability to operate 'with less than anticipated' losses of human lives among coalition

airmen, soldiers, sailors, and marines. Coalition planners thought it imperative not to lose any more aircraft than absolutely necessary.”⁵² This drove attack aircraft to much higher altitudes in an effort to avoid the high volume of antiaircraft artillery encountered closer to the ground, “[entailing] a definite sacrifice in bomb accuracy” for unguided munitions.⁵³

While American casualties were no doubt of great concern to U.S. planners and policy makers, opinion polls indicated that, even with estimated casualty levels as high as 40,000, more Americans believed the Gulf situation was worth going to war over than did not.⁵⁴ Eric Larson of RAND concluded that American support for the war does not appear to have been conditional on low casualties, although the fact that casualties remained low certainly influenced the high levels of support for the war.⁵⁵

Saddam Hussein thought he, too, had learned some lessons from America’s war in Vietnam. His strategy did not necessarily require decisive defeat of the coalition forces to defend Kuwait. If he could draw the coalition into a premature ground offensive and inflict heavy casualties, he believed Western public opinion would demand an early cease-fire, possibly leaving Iraq in control of the most valuable portions of Kuwait.⁵⁶

Operations in Desert Storm were designed to limit civilian suffering in terms of both short-term casualties and long-term damage to Iraq’s infrastructure. The operations order for the air campaign stated that “execution planning will emphasize limiting collateral damage and civilian casualties and preserving the Iraqi and Kuwaiti capability to quickly

reconstitute their economies.”⁵⁷ To comply with this guidance, planners tried to distinguish between long-term and short-term damage to civilian infrastructure such as electric power generation and oil facilities. For example, oil refinery and storage facilities could be attacked, but not oil production facilities. Electric transformers, thought to take months to repair, were fair targets, while generator halls, where repairs could take years, were not.⁵⁸ The hope of military planners was not “to avoid inconvenience to the Iraqi population. Rather, they wished to inflict disruption and a feeling of helplessness on the Iraqi public without bringing about severe suffering – all in the hope of weakening Hussein’s grip.”⁵⁹

Hussein attempted to emphasize the suffering of Iraqi civilians by televising the destruction caused by coalition bombs. While many of these portrayals were clearly Iraqi propaganda, at least one bombing incident resulted in a change of policy. About one week prior to the start of the ground war, U.S. warplanes using precision guided munitions destroyed a command and control bunker in the Al Firdos district of Baghdad. Unknown to Coalition planners, part of the bunker was also being used to house the families of those who worked there. The following morning, General Powell and the rest of the world watched as CNN reported hundreds of civilian casualties, complete with televised images of victims being pulled from the rubble. The result was a sharp reduction in air strikes against targets in downtown Baghdad, from 25 targets in the two weeks prior down to 5 targets in the two weeks following the incident.⁶⁰

Interestingly enough, the deaths of enemy combatants were also handled delicately. Military briefers consistently avoided assessments of Iraqi personnel losses, possibly in an effort to avoid getting back into the business of body counts.⁶¹ Heavy Iraqi casualties also appear to have prompted an early cease-fire. As Iraqi troops fled from Kuwait following the ground attack, Coalition aircraft bombed and strafed convoys of vehicles escaping northward, destroying over 2,000. Interviews with returning pilots, who used phrases such as "a turkey shoot" and "shooting fish in a barrel" prompted a call from Powell to Schwarzkopf. Powell related nervousness from the White House over the potential spectacle of "wanton killing," and asked for an assessment on when they could bring the war to an end. Although he was later to express irritation that "Washington was ready to overreact, as usual to the slightest ripple in public opinion," Schwarzkopf agreed that all objectives would be attained by the following evening.⁶² Political concerns to maintain the moral high ground had prescribed an end to hostilities; but the ground commander had the latitude as to *when* to end them.

International politics exerted additional pressures that served to limit how force was used. The constraints that served to maintain the moral high ground for the U.S. effort at home had the same effect abroad. The politics of coalition warfare required more constraints.

Of primary concern to political and military leaders alike was maintaining the coalition of nations built to oppose Hussein. The United

Nations passed UN Resolution 678 in late November 1990, sanctioning the use of "all necessary means" to expel Iraq from Kuwait.⁶³ By the time the resolution had passed, the Bush administration had assembled a multinational coalition of over 35 nations and 200,000 troops, in addition to the U.S. troops deployed.⁶⁴ While the Resolution was significant in that it implied the authorization of force if Iraq did not pull out of Kuwait by January 15, it also placed a clear limitation on the authorization. The mission it specified was only to free Kuwait of Iraqi forces. It did not specify the occupation of Baghdad, destruction of Iraq, or overthrow of Hussein.⁶⁵ Any advance deep into the heart of Iraq would potentially threaten the integrity of the coalition, particularly the Arab nations. The U.N. Resolution combined with Arab reluctance to destroy a fellow Arab state to create an international constraint on the limits of force in the theater. This sensitivity of Arab-Western relations impacted primarily in two areas: Coalition ground force involvement within the borders of Iraq, and efforts to keep Israel out of the war.

At the highest levels, it was clear from the beginning that Iraq should continue to exist as a nation-state. According to Powell, "From the geopolitical standpoint, the coalition, particularly the Arab states, never wanted Iraq invaded and dismembered." Before the war started, Powell had received a cable from the U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Charles Freeman. Freeman urged restraint: "For a range of reasons we cannot pursue Iraq's unconditional surrender and occupation by us. It is not in our

interest to destroy Iraq or weaken it to the point that Iran and/or Syria are not constrained by it.”⁶⁶ Prior to the start of the ground war, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria all expressed reservations over participating in an attack into Iraq itself. Syria, in particular, expressed reluctance to any offensive actions. Schwarzkopf tailored his plan to allow for these Arab sensitivities about attacking other Arabs. He arranged his forces to allow the Arab nations to participate in the liberation of Kuwait without attacking into Iraq. Syria would be in reserve behind the Egyptian forces. If called on to fight, it would be to help fellow Arabs. In actuality, no Arab coalition forces actually entered Iraq at all, although other coalition forces penetrated as deeply as 90 miles. All Arab forces operated only within Saudi Arabia or Kuwait.⁶⁷

Political concerns for coalition unity also impacted on the basing of B-52 bombers prior to the start of the air war. Because of their link with nuclear weapons, as well as their widespread use in Vietnam, difficulty in obtaining staging rights was not unusual. During Desert Shield, although the Air Force proposed B-52 basing in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Spain, and other countries, American officials were reluctant to press the issue “at a time when weightier matters appeared to be at stake.”⁶⁸ As the air campaign opened, the nearest B-52’s were based 3,000 miles away on Diego Garcia.⁶⁹

A major policy issue relating to the International Coalition was the effort to keep Israel out of the war. The tension between Israel and her Arab neighbors was a critical element of both U.S. efforts to maintain the coalition and Iraqi plans to disrupt it. Israel had never before failed to respond to an

Arab attack. If Tel Aviv ordered a retaliatory strike against an Iraqi air or missile attack, Israeli aircraft would have to fly over Jordan or Saudi Arabian territory to deliver the strike. This could potentially bring neutral Jordan into the war against Israel. The resulting conflict could easily disrupt the international coalition as well as destroy the moderate regime of Jordan's King Hussein.

Efforts to placate Israel and thus keep her out of the war resulted in political diversion of the strategic air campaign as early as the second day of the air war. Planners targeted fixed Scud launch sites on the first night of the war. However, these attacks did not neutralize the mobile launchers, which were to become a much larger threat than was at first thought. Significant resources were subsequently reoriented on the campaign to destroy Iraq's ballistic missile capability. Allied aircraft conducted over 1,500 strikes against Scud launchers and related equipment.⁷⁰ Post war investigations reveal most of the strikes were relatively ineffective. While this military resource expenditure against a militarily insignificant target appears substantial, these attacks comprised only about 3.5 % of over 42,000 strikes by Coalition aircraft during the war.⁷¹

Foreign governments also exerted other pressures. As the forces for the defense of Saudi Arabia, Operation Desert Shield, flowed into the operations area, President Bush became increasingly anxious about the economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations. As early as September 1990 Bush expressed skepticism over the ability of sanctions to force Hussein

to capitulate before the international coalition fell apart.⁷² As the date for launching the ground war approached, Mikhail Gorbachev attempted to broker a plan with Baghdad to prevent further escalation. For President Bush, however, this was a further complication. According to Powell, Bush was set on war to oust Hussein. After having spent over \$60 billion to move over a half million troops, Bush was afraid to lose the chance for a decisive victory. Were Hussein to withdraw with his army more or less intact, much of the threat would remain. This led Bush to push for a compressed timetable to launch the ground war. Hoping to launch the attack on February 21, Schwarzkopf asked to postpone the attack until the 24th to give the two Marine divisions adequate time to prepare for the assault. As the 24th approached, the weather forecast drove Schwarzkopf to push for an additional two-day postponement until the 26th. General Powell and President Bush agreed to this postponement reluctantly. Ultimately, an improvement in the forecast allowed the original date of February 24 to stand. Although there was political pressure to go early, the President left the final decision with the on-scene commander.⁷³

Most of the restrictions imposed on service members in Saudi Arabia in the interest of maintaining positive coalition relations were actually imposed by the military rather than the political leadership. Powell and Schwarzkopf each negotiated at their appropriate level to reduce friction caused by introducing Western standards of conduct and morality into an Islamic country. Protecting the religious rights of American servicemen and

women who were being asked to risk their lives was an important aspect of battlefield morale. Yet televised accounts of Christian and Jewish services in an Islamic nation invited trouble among the Arab members of the coalition. In this case, the military leaders determined and imposed the necessary restrictions necessary to remain focused on the operational and strategic objective.⁷⁴

Somalia

Policy constraints, especially limits on the use of force, are inherent in Peace Operations, which have an objective of preventing conflict. These constraints can prove extremely confusing to the military commander charged with conducting the operation, however. The U.S. involvement in Somalia in 1992-1993 illustrates some of these difficulties, showing both limitations on applying or threatening the use of force in the first place as well as constraints on what type of force might be applied once the decision to employ the military was made.

Somalia had been racked by years of civil war before the regime of president Siad Barre was overthrown in January 1991. Courted in turn by first the Soviet Union and then the United States, Somalia had amassed a large arsenal of small arms and heavier weapons. Captured from government troops, these weapons served to arm more than fourteen separate factions competing to gain control of the vacuum left after Barre's

self-imposed exile. An abortive attempt to establish a government oriented around the separate clans resulted in further fighting among the clans while the majority of the Somali people starved and suffered in the wasteland created thorough years of war and drought.⁷⁵

It was this state of anarchy that the United States was to enter in August of 1992. Military involvement began with Operation *Provide Relief*, a humanitarian assistance mission tasked to support emergency relief efforts in Somalia and Kenya. A worsening security situation led President Bush to expand the roles both the U.S. and the military were to play in not only providing emergency relief, but also restoring order to the country. Operating under a United Nations mandate, Operation *Restore Hope* succeeded in stabilizing the security situation and facilitating the delivery of relief supplies throughout the country. In May of 1993 the operation was transferred from U.S. to U.N. control, and U.S. military involvement scaled back from 28,000 to 4,100 troops, only about 1,400 of whom were combat troops. The drawdown of U.S. involvement was an important policy objective, simultaneously decreasing U.S. military and economic obligations for U.N. peacekeeping activities while increasing the legitimacy of the United Nations as a viable peacekeeping force.⁷⁶

Military operations in Somalia up to this stage were a fairly straightforward peacekeeping effort. Once the President had decided to commit troops, Central Command developed a plan for their employment. They carefully drafted rules of engagement to allow for mission

accomplishment without alienating the population. Significantly, however, Central Command's mission did not include disarming the various militia groups. To do so would entail a commitment of resources and time that President Bush, now a lame-duck president, was unwilling and politically unable to make. In the words of his envoy to Somalia, Robert Oakley, "Bush went as far as he could go."⁷⁷

Prior to UNITAF's transition to UNOSOM II in the spring of 1993, the mission had been fairly successful. Relief agencies were feeding a million people a week, schools had reopened, and UNITAF engineers had begun replacing and improving the infrastructure that years of civil war had damaged or destroyed. Less than 50 Somalis had been killed by UNITAF forces, and U.S. forces had suffered only two combat deaths, despite hundreds of confrontations.⁷⁸ However, as the majority of American combat power withdrew, Aideed saw an opportunity to take advantage of a weaker U.N. force, one with perhaps less resolve, to establish what he believed to be his rightful control over the country. Aideed's belligerence against U.N. forces rapidly escalated into violent action when forces commanded by the warlord ambushed a Pakistani patrol in early June, killing 24 and wounding more than 50.⁷⁹ In response to increasing U.N. pressure to capture Aideed, U.S. Special Operations Command formed a strike force known as Task Force Ranger for this purpose. The task force deployed in August 1993 over the objections of CJCS Powell and CENTCOM Commander General Joseph Hoar, according to a report prepared by the Senate Armed Services

Committee. Powell and Hoar felt the mission stood little chance of success and would only embroil the U.S., in Powell's words, "deeper and deeper into ancient Somali clan rivalries. I tried to get our spreading commitment reviewed, but was unsuccessful."⁸⁰ But U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali wanted Aideed. Co-author of the report, Senator John Warner, wrote that DOD officials subordinated U.S. interests to "the Clinton Administration's desire to see this U.N. operation succeed."⁸¹

However, while the military mission was changing, so too was U.S. policy. Thinking himself undergunned, the commander of U.S. forces in Somalia, General Thomas Montgomery, requested armored vehicles and AC130 gunships to beef up his predominately light infantry forces twice in September. This request, however, was at odds with one facet of what had become a two-track policy on Somalia.⁸² While the military hunted for Aideed and his lieutenants, the State Department would also work through diplomatic channels and the U.N. to bring together Somalia's different factions. General Powell was not in favor of increasing U.S. involvement – he had been lobbying Secretary of Defense Les Aspin for weeks to help devise an exit strategy. However, he bowed to the judgment of the on-scene commander and backed Montgomery's request.⁸³ Aspin denied the request. According to the Senate report, "they feared a political backlash would undermine their pro-United Nations policy."⁸⁴ Said the Office of the Secretary of Defense, "U.S. policy in Somalia was to reduce its military presence . . . not to increase it."⁸⁵

The following month, Task Force Ranger engaged hundreds of Aideed loyalists, who shot down two helicopters and killed 18 U.S. soldiers over the course of an 18 hour firefight. With the raiding force cut off and isolated by Somali forces, heavy small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire stopped a U.S. relief force equipped with armored Humvees and five-ton trucks reinforced with sandbags. An ad hoc U.N. relief force of Pakistani M48 tanks and Malaysian BRDMs carrying U.S. soldiers finally succeeded in reaching the raid force. According to many of the U.S. ground force commanders, as well as the Senate investigation of the battle, U.S. tanks, armored personnel carriers, and AC130 gunships would have made a difference and saved American lives. According to General Montgomery, "If we had [the requested armor], we could have gotten there faster. We would have taken fewer casualties."⁸⁶ Commenting on the gunships, Colonel William Boykin, ground component commander for Task Force Ranger, testified "The single biggest void was the absence of AC-130s. They would have made a big difference."⁸⁷ Secretary Aspin said afterward that refusing Montgomery's request had been a mistake.⁸⁸

Impact and Implications

The military has recognized that policy constraints are a part of war, and that one of these constraints will continue to be a limit on force. The coordinating draft of the updated *Field Manual 100-5 (Operations)*, the

Army's capstone manual, acknowledges the Army's utility "in operations in which violence, applied or threatened, is not effective or is proscribed."⁸⁹

While the size of the military is shrinking, its role is increasing as a diplomatic tool of coercion and humanitarian relief. As such it must continue to operate effectively with constraints on force. The civil-military equation is also changing. The military has re-earned the respect it lost in Vietnam, primarily as the result of resounding military success in the Gulf War as well as Panama and Bosnia. The policy makers that sent them there understood their capabilities and limitations. But the demographics of the government and the military are changing. As a result of an all-volunteer force, fewer Americans have any military experience. Whereas during the Vietnam War two-thirds of the members of Congress were veterans, today nearly two-thirds are not.⁹⁰

The military too has changed, required to emphasize peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations while training for war. But while the force that fought the Iraqi's was designed, trained, and equipped to defeat a superpower, the force that fights the next conflict will be something less.⁹¹ The military leadership has become out of necessity more attuned with the political objectives of force employment, and limits itself accordingly to match the desired end state. The military can expect to remain active in the policy-making role.

For the most part, political constraints in recent years do not appear to have adversely affected the outcome of military operations. Congressional

constraints, especially those specified in the War Powers Act, have not been very constraining at all. As thousands of troops deployed to Saudi Arabia for Operation Desert Shield, Congress adjourned for the year in late October without invoking the Act. President Bush did not appear too concerned in any case. In a December discussion on the Congressional debate over whether to wait for sanctions to work or to go on the offensive, Bush claimed "I'll prevail, or I'll be impeached." Powell believed that Bush "had completely resigned himself to war. If he won, Congress's opinion would not matter; and if he lost, he was prepared to lose the presidency."⁹² As casualties mounted in Somalia, Congress chose to pass nonbinding resolutions requesting the President consult with Congress about the deployment rather than invoke the Act. And it was rarely mentioned prior to the U.S. intervention in Haiti in 1994.⁹³ This trend may be reversing somewhat, however. The end of the Soviet threat has led to increasing debate within and between the legislative and executive branches over what is and is not a national interest. The animated Congressional debates over military involvement in Somalia, Haiti, and Bosnia attest to their willingness to challenge the president's decisions on the use of force.⁹⁴ However, Congress continues to restrain itself from dictating policy to the White House. Recent emphasis has been on framing the issue in such a way that it attracts media and administration attention, seeking to change policy indirectly. The Clinton administration appears to understand the importance of consulting with Congress. In the case of U.S.

involvement in Bosnia, President Clinton pledged that he would not commit troops without clear congressional support.⁹⁵

More limiting is the desire to maintain popular support for a military operation. Weinberger established it as one of his criteria for military involvement. While public support for presidential action is desirable, George Schultz "argued that to require public support before an intervention was to hide behind the skirts of public opinion."⁹⁶ Popular support is determined by the public's perception of whether perceived gains, in terms of national interests, are worth the costs. Experience shows that Americans are willing to accept casualties when the principles and interests at stake are important enough, as in the Gulf War. Conversely, the majority of Americans did not view the efforts to save the Somalis from themselves to be worth the cost in American lives. A majority did favor additional attacks on Aided if required to safely recover U.S. servicemen being held hostage, however.⁹⁷

Political desires to keep the conflict short, decisive, and therefore popular have fallen in line with the military's desire for overwhelming force in any combat situation. As long as the mission was clearly a combat mission, policy makers since Vietnam have provided the force the military wanted. Only when the mission was not viewed as a combat mission, such as in Somalia, were military commanders not provided the amount of force they felt they needed. Powell and Schwarzkopf made most of the decisions in the Gulf War that limited how and where force was applied. Where political

factors did intrude, such as diversion of resources against Scud missiles and limiting targets in Baghdad, the effects on the overall campaign were not significant.

A hope to keep casualties low has led presidents to approve the overwhelming force that is usually requested for combat operations. Panama, Desert Storm, Haiti, and Bosnia each had heavy troop commitments. Somalia, too, had overwhelming force in the beginning. Casualties mounted as U.S. troops withdrew. Overwhelming force was subsequently employed to extract the remaining American forces. The Secretary of Defense who denied the ground commander in Somalia the forces he requested was later forced to resign because of his mistake.

American sensitivity to non-U.S. casualties, especially among civilian noncombatants but even applying to enemy soldiers, has also come to affect public support. In previous wars, the American public has demonstrated its support for heavy use of force against civilian populations when it meant reducing U.S. casualties. One objective of the strategic bombing campaign of World War Two was to avoid the casualties seen in World War One.⁹⁸ And a Fortune Magazine poll conducted after the Japanese surrender indicated only 5 percent of those polled felt the U.S. should not have used the atomic bomb. Fifty-four percent agreed with the decision to bomb the two Japanese cities, while 23 percent believed the U.S. "should have quickly used many more of them before Japan had a chance to surrender."⁹⁹ The Germans, too, suffered the enmity of the American people. "When asked in open-ended fashion what

should be done with the Japanese and German people after the war, some 10 to 15 percent volunteered the response that the enemy populations should be exterminated.”¹⁰⁰ Hatred of the enemy had softened somewhat by 1970, however. In a Gallup poll conducted that year, 69 percent gave the Viet Cong a “highly unfavorable” rating, compared to 76 percent for the Ku Klux Klan and 75 percent for the Black Panthers.¹⁰¹ It is clear that such levels of force will not be tolerated when national survival is not at stake.

Continued development of precision guided munitions and non-lethal weapons will better prepare the military for constrained operations. Precision weapons in the Gulf War showcased American abilities to limit killing to that which is essential. Non-lethal weapons technology has the potential to reduce that level further. The military must guard against the perception of bloodless war, however. The military’s confidence in these weapons does more than demonstrate its capabilities. It may also act “as the foundation for unrealistic expectations regarding low numbers of noncombatant, friendly, and even enemy casualties.”¹⁰²

The role of the media has become increasingly important in its ability to portray those costs, as well as the benefits of intervention. Public opinion supported intervention when the images portrayed food being distributed to starving people. Support fell off significantly when those images portrayed the same people dragging American corpses through the streets.¹⁰³ Powell cited fears of public reaction to “wanton killing” of Iraqi soldiers in his decision to recommend early termination of the Gulf War. Polling data from

Somalia suggests, however, that media images did not affect the direction of public opinion – it merely served to reinforce opinions and trends. As in Vietnam the media followed, rather than led, the decline in popular support.¹⁰⁴

The military has become more media-savvy and must remain so. Powell noted in the Gulf War “we were talking not only to the press assembled in front of us; we were talking to four other audiences – the American people, foreign nations, the enemy, and our troops. I would never, for example, say anything for domestic consumption and ignore its impact on Iraq, or vice versa.”¹⁰⁵ The Draft FM 100-5 addresses this reality: “The presence of the media and worldwide U.S. Army commitment mean soldiers’ actions can have direct and immediate operational or strategic consequences.”¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

If recent history serves as an example, future armed conflicts are most likely to be limited: threats to national interests rather than national survival. American rules of war may be different in a war of national survival. But when fighting for national interests, vital or not, and especially in humanitarian or peace operations, constraints on force will certainly remain in place – such is the nature of limited war.

While these constraints do exist, they do not to present a significant obstacle to military employment when that employment is understood to

include combat. Constraints have much greater impact when the threat of combat is not clear or is underestimated, as was the case in Somalia. The American public has demonstrated its willingness to support force options when the benefit to be gained is worth the cost in lives, a cost that is increasingly coming to include civilian and enemy lives as well. To a great degree, constraints on force imposed *on* the military have corresponded with constraints imposed *by* the military on itself. These institutional constraints reflect a necessary understanding on the part of military leaders of the political object to be gained by use of force and a determination of both military and political leaders to avoid protracted conflict with an ambiguous mission.

The past quarter century has seen a change in the way the U.S. military fights. The end of the Cold War, the shift to an all-volunteer force, the military draw-down, and technological improvements have each played a role in that change. But America's experience in Vietnam had the greatest impact. In its aftermath, soldiers and policy makers alike sought not only to explain the defeat but also to prevent a reoccurrence. For many, especially those in the military, the blame lay with a lack of clear strategic objectives, civilian micromanagement, and anti-war activists back home. While the military's fear is to be employed under the same constraints, the legacy of Vietnam, to the military and to those in government, was a change in military strategy designed to prevent those conditions from again arising. One of the positive consequences of that war eventually emerged as the

Powell Doctrine, which provides for employing military force for specified objectives with the full support of the American people. It also provides an employment consideration long sought after by the military – overwhelming force. The military and civilian policy makers have accepted these employment guidelines because they offer a solution to the lessons of Vietnam. Today's limits on force, whether imposed by political leaders or the military itself, serve more as a complement than a constraint to American foreign policy.

Notes

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⁸⁷ Naylor, 31.

⁸⁸ Rick Maze, "Lawmakers Accuse Aspin of Betraying U.S. Troops," Air Force Times (November 8, 1993), 18.

⁸⁹ U.S. Army, Operations, Field Manual 100-5 (Draft) (Fort Leavenworth, KS, 14 January 1997), 1-2-3.

⁹⁰ Thomas E. Ricks, "On American Soil: The Widening Gap Between the U.S. Military and U.S. Society" (Cambridge, MA: The John M. Olin Institute Working Paper Series, August, 1996), 19.

⁹¹ Sarkesian, xi.

⁹² Powell, 499; James M. Lindsay, "Congress and the Use of Force in the Post-Cold War Era" in The United States and the Use of Force in the Post-Cold War Era (Queenstown, MD: The Aspen Institute, 1995), 90.

⁹³ Lindsay, 90.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 72.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 86-7, 104.

⁹⁶ Zakaria, 185.

⁹⁷ Larson, 67.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁹⁹ Mueller, War, Presidents, and Public Opinion, 172.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 173.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² FM 100-5 (Draft), 1-2-8 - 1-2-9.

¹⁰³ Larson, 43-44.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 71.

¹⁰⁵ Powell, 529.

¹⁰⁶ FM 100-5 (Draft), 1-2-8.

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